

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, CH
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

C.P. Attachment A.

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Thank you for your letter dated 25 November concerning the situation of EU nationals in Switzerland. I have read your letter and annexed documentation with great interest and can assure you that the Commission is well aware of the living and working conditions for foreigners in Switzerland.

That is why we have negotiated and signed a far-reaching agreement on the free movement of persons with Switzerland, which will considerably improve the situation in the future. In fact, the agreement foresees that upon entry into force, equivalent rules to those applicable in the Union will be applied by Switzerland. Subject to the pertaining transitional periods, access to the Swiss labour market will be liberalised in accordance with the same rules applicable in the EU among Member States. Thus, practically the whole *acquis communautaire* in the area of free movement of persons will also be applicable in Switzerland.

This Agreement should normally enter into force sometime in 2001, after completion of the ratification procedures by Switzerland, the Community and the Member States. In the coming months, the text of the Agreement will be transmitted by the Council to the European Parliament, for approval.

The Commission will monitor the implementation of the Agreement very closely. Should there be any shortcomings or problems, then these will be brought to the attention of the Joint Committee to be set up under the Agreement. The monitoring and information activities, which you propose, will indeed be undertaken in this framework.



Mr. Michael Cashman, MEP
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